

telegraph in those days, but Merlin has better  
his message than all the telegraphs & telephone in the  
world. for there came only tell what has been told  
to them, still he whispered secrets in the king's  
ear that had never before been <sup>breathed</sup> to mortal  
man. He was as clever as he was wise. It was  
he who ~~had~~ build that wonderful royal palace  
in the city of legends that made King Arthur's  
famous Round Table, the King's Chair of Gold.  
Now he was examining Sir Lancelot's work in  
perpignan with careful & approving eye, while  
the old knight looked on, ~~stayed~~ <sup>stayed</sup> thannefast  
as a girl, wondering what the young maids  
would say to his work.

For this strange Old Man, who could read the  
future like a printed book, & could with any  
marvel he had a mind to, was not an old  
man at all, but a ~~fair~~ slim beardless youth  
with a hawk's eye & a supple frame. People  
said that, younger he looked, he could remember  
all about Noah's Flood & he liked. But they  
took care not to say much about Merlin, for  
folk believed he could hear the <sup>very</sup> first sermon in a  
water ~~sea~~, & knew <sup>all the family affairs</sup> ~~the language~~ of the birds.

"What-sayest-Ron, Merlin?" cried the King, & Merlin was at his side, with his hawk-eyed eyes on the child, who returned in perfect silence as why should she not—in her innocence?

"Call her Helena Sir, after that princess"



for hands, wrapping the best tight bandages of  
fine white-linen.

No sooner did the nurse see Duke Noel enter the house,  
than she arose, <sup>and, without a moment's delay,</sup> carrying the baby high in both  
hands; & kneeling on one knee amongst the  
pale-thrown rushes, she presented the little  
girl to her father.

Now the odd thing was, the duke did not know  
what to do with a baby; he held out his great-  
right-hand flat; & all the nurse could do  
was to lay the baby upon it like a herring on  
a dish, for <sup>how</sup> ~~she~~ dared <sup>she</sup> not instruct her master.

What to do with it next! That was the question.  
The baby pucker'd up her small red face, when  
father pucker'd up his ~~to match~~, & thought it was  
no great thing after all to have a baby.

"Kiss her," said the mother.

So he carried her up to his mouth, lying flat on  
his one hand, & mother'd the little gas in his  
foot-curl'd black beard. ~~At~~ <sup>But</sup> the baby splutter'd  
& choked.

"Bring her to me!" called her mother in a  
great-piercing: & mightily glad Noel was to get  
rid of his little daughter.

And mightily glad was her mother to get back the  
little girl safe & sound, <sup>to</sup> ~~so~~ <sup>the</sup> coast over her,  
& cuddled her, & fed her; & by day, the two went to  
sleep.

But before it was light the next morning, Duke  
Noel was awakened in the middle of happy  
dreams by a terrible sound of wailing. He  
rubbed his eyes & sat upon bed, for he thought  
to be sure he was dreaming still; but no, the  
wides awake he became the more he heard it, now,



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a <sup>thrill</sup> ~~following~~ cry of grief, now the voice  
of grief unutterable.  
"The mourners!" he cried, his heart-sank  
like lead, a chill like the cold of death struck  
him ~~with~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~body~~ <sup>clothes</sup> ~~like~~ <sup>like</sup> a drunken man; but  
it was with wine, not with wine he was drunk;  
there was no need to tell him what had  
happened: he knew well enough that it was not  
the little men, born baby the mourners were  
bewailing. "his bride he shall give" - over &  
over & over those words kept ringing in his  
ears & he could not get the lips of him help  
saying them to himself.

The door of his chamber was opened cautiously  
& Isom the steward of the palace came in  
with white face & sorrow-stricken face. Between  
the duke was leaning against the wall like a  
man disheartened, his lips moving all the time  
with the words "his bride he shall give".  
They took his cold hands & led him into  
chamber where his lady lay, still & beautiful.  
The room was filled with the mourners, beating  
their breasts, swaying their bodies, & filling  
the palace with their cries of <sup>little</sup> grief.

~~Ross Duke Noel!~~  
"Thore! Thore! Thore!" went a wailing  
through the hall & passage, & the echoes ~~repeated~~  
~~of the court~~ <sup>repeated</sup> "Thore!" & the walls on  
their kennels took up the wail. The air was  
filled with sounds of mourning.

Ross Duke Noel!

The Christening.

"And, indeed, my lord Isom, 'tis my right - that  
my

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"Canst you play with your old dad? Writ you  
dare me for your mate? Or is my little maid  
tired of her father?"

But he hardly got out the words before his  
mouth was stopp'd with kisses & soft child  
arms squeezed his neck hard & big blue  
eyes brimming with tears ~~payed into his~~ <sup>their</sup> ~~their~~  
pill of ~~pain~~ <sup>sad reproach</sup>. It was long  
before ~~her~~ her father could comfort - ~~Remind~~  
Helene: he told her merry tales; & described  
her countries; & related of all the fine  
things they would do when she was a grown-up  
princess; but - all the time the child lay still  
& sat in her father's arms without a word  
or a word. Then Noel be thought him that  
a fellow with him was also up to the ears  
in the real pains which now & then came  
over his little maid: so he ordered her  
white pony, Guinever - the gift of the Queen - &  
he brought round with his own black dog,  
& the least now - <sup>pink</sup> of gladness came into  
Helene's cheek as she set her dainty foot in  
the hand of her squire & sprang like a bird  
into the saddle.

At first - the two walked their horses, & there  
was no talk: but - Guinever was quivering  
with the pleasure of the sweet spring air &  
longed to stretch her legs across the  
plains; how could her mistress hold her  
back from any pleasure? So walk became  
a gallop; horses & riders, horses & riders <sup>pleased</sup>  
over

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over the flowing plain, among many other sects. & then at last - they drew near. Helena heard the sound of the sea in her nostrils & the taste of it in her lips & her eyes were dancing & her heart beating for joy in the sea & the earth.

How could she help but be glad? Then, right over head at a great height was a ~~little~~ dark speck, no bigger than a hazel nut - & took it - pointing out of his little throat - & forth of it the wilds & the sky were full of it: the flowers! Now that the horses were walking, she had time to look at them: there were crowds of yellow daffodils nodding in the breeze. Sweet primroses pink as snow in February, & the blue-bells stretched away among the bushes exactly like a piece of ~~blue~~ sky laid down on the green earth. And that reminded Helena of one of her puzzles: the blue-bells at a distance ~~the sky~~ looked exactly like the sky: now, what if all the sky were really made of blue-bells, & the blue-bells in the wood were just <sup>down from</sup> some of the seeds dropped down?

But - guess that was a question she could not ask her father or anybody: indeed, little girls have a great many puzzles they do not like to speak about. And that reminded her of her little trouble of the morning, & the question she really did wish to ask her father.

"Father, if you will be good, & not say any more thing about - tired of my father, - I will tell you about it."

"I must try to be a good boy! But - is it that my bell will tell me about?"

"Yes"





It is a curious fact: that if you wish for anything a great-deal, it generally comes. If you have wished in a cross, discontented way, the thing you have wished for comes, & makes you unhappy: but if you have been good & as the time you were wishing, the thing comes as a gift - & makes you very glad & thankful.

The very next-day after the ride to the shore a wonderful & delightful thing happened to the princess Helene: she was walking on the terrace with good nurse General, getting happy enough, because good little girls, whether they be princesses or peasants, are usually happy; in front amongst the flowers she stopped, trying to catch a butterfly in her brodered handkerchief, when, all of a sudden, the light-brick clatter of horse's hoofs caught her ear.

"My father, or General" she cried, & ~~to nurse~~ General, standing breathless, prepared up, in the middle of a bed of belliflowers.

"No, it can't be my father; it is a lighter horse & a lighter rider. Who can it be?"

And then, all at once, a bright-plush spread over neck straw into the sudden hope.

"Can it, can it be my playfellow!"

And then, sure enough, came cantering into the court, a small, wonderful Arab horse, with the most beautiful boy in his Rock Red over a princess dreamed of.

He caught sight of the lovely little lady, & landing



standing amongst the flowers, just-like those  
 white marble people who live in gardens. In a  
 twinkling, he had leapt from his horse, & was  
 clanking, plumed cap in hand, to address her.

"Do you always live in flower-beds?"

Now Helena had had time to recollect herself,  
 answered very quickly, just-like a princess,

"No: only when I wish to catch butterflies."

"Oh, never catch butterflies: you don't know  
 who they are! But what are you?"

"I don't understand what you mean."

"You are such a beautiful thing!" a great deal  
 prettier than a king-fisher, or a pheasant. I  
 never saw anything like you. Tell me what  
 you are!"

"I am a princess, & and - I am a little  
 girl; is that what you mean?"

"Oh, you are a little girl!" I was told there were  
 little girls. Are there many?"

"There are some little peasant-girls in the  
 village."

"Are they like you?"

Now this was a hard question for Helena to  
 answer. She thought she was nicer than the  
 rough little girls of the village, but she did  
 not like to say so.

"I don't know," said Helena.

"Don't you know? How funny! I should know in  
 a minute. Have they hair like daffodils,  
 & eyes like blue-bells, & a covering as pretty  
 as a kingfisher's feathers?"

But Helena could not look the beautiful boy  
 in the face for shame. She had never told a fib

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before what would her father say?

"What a story, I think they'd find it comic."

The boy looked bewildered: Why did this little girl cast down her eyes & speak in whispers? What was the matter with her? What did she mean by a story? He didn't know what to say next.

Then Helena looked out of the corners of her eyes to see why he did not speak: & she saw two things, the boy's puzzled face, & that his hair was peppered with a great pearl as big as a pigeon's egg.

"What a beautiful big pearl you have!" she said.

"Yes," said he, "that's the only thing I've got. It shows that I'm a prince so they call me prince Pearlkin."

"But doesn't your father tell them you're a prince? I haven't got a pearl, but everybody knows I'm prince Helena."

"I haven't got a father. What is a father?"

"Haven't you got a father? Poor little boy!" And Helena's blue eyes filled: "Oh, a father's the beautifullest wisest big man in the world, with black hair like yours & black hair. But you shall see my father, & have him for your very own, & you shall live with my father & me. Would you like?"

Prince Pearlkin had no time to answer, for that very moment came a louder clatter of hoofs & in rode the duke on his black charger.

He did not know what to make of the pretty young before him, - his little girl, still amongst the pretty young.